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Greetings from Iraq. All of us are settling into our "Battle Rhythm" which is how our days here are structured. If your soldiers are on a staff, their rhythm is built around Division meetings, Battalion meetings, and key periods during the day. If your soldiers are on the line in signal, infantry, maintenance or support platoons, their schedule is built around key tasks they must accomplish for the day. We are ensuring everyone's battle rhythm has sufficient time to sleep, eat, and exercise. However, as you might suspect, our battle rhythm's are a flexible thing. My Battalion Staff is on their seventh battle rhythm update since we started operations here. The updates are made based on changes to meeting times or something we have decided to add or take off the schedule. Now on to the news from each of our units...

It's been another busy week for the HHC Inn-Keepers. The Support Platoon has been especially busy preparing the ammunition holding area. This area is used to store all of the ammunition for the battalion. These Soldiers have spent a lot of time and effort cleaning and accounting for all of this ammunition. In addition to this task, the Support Platoon is still responsible for running the Division Dining Facility and the Bus Support mission. The key player of the week is PFC Amy Woody. PFC Woody is a truck driver that can always be counted on to get the job done. She has played a major role in ensuring that 3ID had a safe redeployment, and continues to participate in 4IDs transition into theater. In addition to her great work ethic, PFC Woody always displays a positive attitude. She is an up and coming Soldier with a great future in the Army. As always, thanks for your support and prayers. Now to the leaders of the Division Headquarters...

Division Troops Company continues with our mission of Commanding and Controlling the task force known as Multi-National Division - Baghdad. Our physical Division HQs, where most of the company works, is similar to our headquarters at Fort Hood. And like at Fort Hood, the team responsible for maintaining the workspace and keeping everything going behind the scenes is Master Sergeant Gary Kent ("The Bulldog") and his Headquarters' Commandant team. MSG Kent and his troopers are doing an awesome job in keeping the headquarters running. From ensuring the physical security of the building, to monitoring the power plants that supply the electricity, to keeping the building clean – these soldiers work hard every day. Great Job, Master Sergeant! Next up are the Division's best communicators...

Hello all! It's been another productive week in Alpha Company, STB. The cable platoon has been especially on the go. PFC Tiffany Bishop and SSG Marion Johnson flew to a remote site where they actually were able to meet

some of the newest Iraqi army soldiers while conducting their mission. The Iraqi soldiers were interested in the cable soldier's mission and took advantage of the opportunity to brush up on their English. All of them wanted to have their picture taken with PFC Bishop and SSG Johnson, including the Iraqi company First Sergeant! Later PFC Bishop and SSG Johnson were invited to dine with the Iraqi company commander. But it isn't all work; many soldiers in the Hub Platoon enjoy playing pool. PFC Adam Orlowski, SPC Jarod Dawson, and SFC Troy Joiner challenge each other weekly and noticed that the house cues were old, bent, or otherwise unserviceable. SFC Joiner wrote in to various pool cue manufacturers and described the situation. Very soon after that an influx of cues started to pour in! To date he has received about 10! The soldiers were thrilled and took their pick. The remaining cues will be donated to MWR so soldiers from other units or in Qatar on R&R can benefit from SFC Joiner's resourcefulness. We have four soldiers in A Company being promoted on 1 February, PFC Melissa Reyes, PFC Kelvin Davis, PFC DeMarcus Jackson, and PV2 Shannon Durbin. Now it's time to hear from the Best Band in the Land...

We experienced our first small sand storm since our arrival in Iraq. Although, it was small, it still produced a large amount of dust and nothing was safe from its grasp or path. CW3 Otha Hester walked in the chow hall and it seemed as though he was walking into a haze that would not leave. Just wait until he sees a large storm blow through. The Latin Band, *Fiero Caliente*, started out the week with a blazing performance at one of the local MWR Latin Nights. Under the direction of SFC Aulio Marroquin, the band performed high tempo Meringues, Salsas, Mambos and Tex-Mex tunes. The smooth voice of SGT Louis Feliciano is something to be heard. He came to us just before deployment from a tanker unit and added a true Latin feel to our Latin band; a multi-talented soldier /musician who has elevated the Band's musical prowess to new heights with his abilities as a singer/ song writer. This young sergeant is planning to attend the US Army Element School of Music and become a qualified Army musician upon his return from deployment. The Country Band, under the direction of SSG Chris Kerley is a sight (and sound) to experience. They performed their debut performance at the Division chow hall, performing popular contemporary and oldie country tunes (Garth Brooks eat your heart out) that were enjoyed by all listeners. The Jazz Ensemble, Woodwind Quintet, Brass Quintet and the Boogy Band also kept the "Spirit of the Iron Horse" alive performing in chow halls and MWR's throughout the camp. Keep sending your love and care packages to the Band and don't forget to mention them in your prayers. The band sends their love. Moving on to the Dealers of D Company...

This week, we're going to be looking into the section in D Company that develops pictures. They are a very tight knit team led by CW3 Mark Quarrell. CW3 Quarrell keeps his soldiers and civilian in check by occasionally singing song's to them – if you can imagine. He is assisted by two fine NCOs: SSG Johnnie Bourque "day shift NCOIC" and SSG Jay Gordon "night shift NCOIC." The teams of soldiers they lead are affectionately known as "Squints," from all

the squinting they do when looking at pictures. The day shift consists of their resident Super Squint, Specialist (Promotable) Micah Zook whose analytical abilities exceed that of Superman. SPC Jeffrey Alexander, AKA, Houdini, “not to be confused with the actual Magician” is another great analyst with a trick for disappearing acts (his own). The night shift has Sergeant Joseph Gardner, who hails from a place so secret we’re not even sure where it is. He is joined by Sergeant Christopher Babcock, who is a fresh spirit, diligent and hard worker, has impeccable manners, keeps his room tidy and above all is committed to our U.S. ARMY (this sentence is for people who don’t know him or in case his mom reads my newsletter). Last but certainly not least, is Rocco Colabella a civilian Field Service Representative who fixes our equipment. Rocco is a very humorous contractor who contributes daily to the section’s mission. All fun aside, this is a super professional group of Soldiers who get the mission completed with minimal supervision. They are making a huge impact on what we are doing here. Of note; SPC Zook and SPC Babcock will be two of our newest Non Commissioned Officers and will be promoted within the next two months. SSG Gordon Reenlisted last week for “indef” status—which means he has decided to make the Army his career. His reenlistment ceremony was conducted by CPT Mike Sowa. Your soldiers in D Company are doing an excellent job – you can be very proud of them every day. Next up is our very own military journalists, the soldiers of the Iron Quill...

The 4th Infantry Division Soldiers are enjoying the first edition of *The Ivy Leaf* as they continue their mission here in Iraq!! Lots of good stories about our soldiers and mission. If you want to catch a glimpse of this 363rd Mobile Public Affairs publication you can see it at the Ft. Hood/ 4 ID website.

<http://www.hood.army.mil/4ID/news/ivyleaf/ivyleafjan06.pdf>

As Army Reserve Soldiers on active duty, these troops have different jobs as civilians back home, but sometimes they are the same. One of the busiest guys on their staff is SSG Christian Farrell. SSG Farrell is a broadcast journalist who hails from the Hudson Valley of New York and works as a news reporter for a network news station. SSG Farrell is also the weekend Sports Reporter for his station. We have taken advantage of those skill sets and now he writes a sports column for *The Ivy Leaf*. He loves all sports and enjoys writing the column. One of the most interesting things he has done since he has been here is to serve as the Narrator for the Transition of Authority Ceremony when 4 ID took over from 3 ID earlier this month. He also was able to talk via the Satellite TV system we call DVIDS, back to his home TV station and tell them how he was doing and talk about all the great things 4 ID is doing. He spoke to his wife briefly - she is the weather forecaster for the station - and even was able to sing happy birthday to his son, Jaden, who turns two next week. The folks on the other end expressed their deep appreciation for all that is being done here for the folks back home and for the Iraqi people. Now let’s take a look to see what our security company has been up to over the last week...

The Alpha Company Gators are rolling along with the mission. This week they handled security for some VIP visitors, conducted several combat patrols in the Baghdad area, performed maintenance on their fleet of vehicles, and continued to train on important tasks that keep them battle focused. Two staff sergeants, SSG Jason Shields and SSG Deandre Stinson were awarded a coin from the Assistant Division Commander for Support during a walk-through of their motor pool. One of their battle squad leaders, SGT Rosita Fregoso, was recognized by the company as the Soldier of the Week. She has demonstrated a remarkable ability to train and lead her soldiers, as well as maintaining her vehicles to a high standard. She is highly respected by her soldiers and leaders alike. The troopers continue to get situated in their living and work spaces and are representing themselves well as part of our Battalion. Next up is a unit that we have not mentioned to date, a signal company that is working with us, Alpha Company, 133rd Signal Battalion...

Families of A Company, 133 Signal Battalion, welcome to the newsletter from the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division. Your soldiers have transitioned to a new unit as the 3rd Infantry Division has moved out and the 4th Infantry Division has taken over in the Baghdad area. The company still works with the 48th Brigade Combat Team, but take day to day guidance from my Battalion and Division. For those of you in Illinois, I hope the winter is not too harsh this year. Our weather here in Iraq is warming up to a spring time climate; along with spring time rains. We have been dealing with some sticky mud due to recent rains. All the fine powdery dust that your soldiers battled for months in the tents turns to cake batter when mixed with rain. Throw in lots of rocks to stick to your boots and you have an idea of what we walk through everyday. To put it in perspective though – last year your troops were wading through waste deep flood waters during the rainy season. Our camp Governor has greatly improved the drainage systems throughout our living areas so now the flood waters mostly drain away quickly. The shallow puddles stick around but the deep waters are no longer an issue. Well enough about our weather! Over the coming months, these troops will be cleaning their equipment for shipment home. You should expect lots of packages returning from your soldiers as they clear out excess items they have collected since being in Iraq over the last year. They have the same amount of shipping space on the return trip as they had coming to Iraq...so all personal excess has to be sold or mailed home. The troops appreciate all the gifts you have send them over the months; but just can't take it all back home with them. Thanks for all your continued support to these great National Guard soldiers. Again, welcome to the 4ID Special Troops Battalion team.

Thank you for all your support. The Emails, letters and packages continue to arrive. I appreciate all each of you do to support us on this deployment. We're as proud of you as you are of us. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we are keeping you in ours. Also, continue to look after one another every day. Please contact my Rear Detachment Commander, Captain Jeff Jordan, for any

issues you need help with. He can be reached at (254) 449-3184, or Email at Jeffrey.j.jordan@us.army.mil.

Sincerely, LTC John W. Baker
Baghdad, Iraq
30 January 2006

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